

growing futures




**Early Care and Education in
North Dakota**


**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
VISIONING PLAN
2000-2005**

Early Care and Education in North Dakota

*The Department of Human Services, Children and Family Services Division, with a Head Start - State Collaboration supplemental grant convened the **Early Care and Education Summit, October 2000**. Participants included representation from Health, Education, Child Care, Social Service Agencies, Tribal Entities, Disabilities, Higher Education, parents and community members. The purpose was to:*

- ◆ Promote and enhance state and local planning to identify community needs and create a comprehensive plan for early care and education services.
- ◆ Enhanced Head Start's participation in contributions to such planning and development efforts; and
- ◆ Create a shared vision for improving Early Care and Education and help to secure the human and fiscal resourced needs to implement state and local plans.

From this effort the  Visioning Plan will mobilize North Dakota to ensure that all young children and their families are safe and healthy with the resources to achieve their full potential.

The  Visioning Plan

I. Expanded Program Development:

Goal Statement: *To provide comprehensive services to meet the changing needs of families.*

Recommendation 1: To increase the quality and availability of early care and education to all children and families. This can be achieved by expanding Head Start services, supporting the recruitment and retention of child care providers and increasing the availability of child care for children with special needs, infant/toddler, before and after school, and odd hour care.

Recommendation 2: To support families in their efforts to achieve self-sufficiency. This can be achieved by creating flexible, family friendly work environments, simplifying how parents access services such as WIC, Child Care Assistance, and other programs, and reduce the impact of transportation as a barrier to receiving services.

II. Professional Development:


Goal Statement: *To have well prepared early childhood professionals working in satisfying environments with opportunities for career advancement.*

Recommendation 3: To increase the professionalism of people who work with young children. This can be achieved by a career development ladder that integrates education and experience, and implements TEACH (Teacher Education And Compensation Helps).

Recommendation 4: To promote positive working conditions for early care and education professionals. This can be achieved by increasing the availability of health insurance and other benefit programs, staff development and training opportunities.

III Enhanced Collaboration


Goal Statement: *To achieve a shared commitment among decision makers to ensure that North Dakota's young children and their families are safe and healthy.*

Recommendation 5: To recruit and strengthen the public and private partnerships by identifying key agencies, organizations, businesses and state/community leaders who will assist with the development and dissemination of information specific to Early Care and Education, with local community planning committees. This can be achieved by distributing the  Visioning plan, and creating a public awareness campaign surrounding the issues identified in the document.

IV. Funding

Goal Statement: *North Dakota's young children and their families will have well funded, comprehensive, quality early care and education services and programs.*

Recommendation 6: To define leadership for a statewide effort to address issues of child care and workforce development. This can be achieved by convening a Financing Summit to coordinate public and private resources, and compile data that looks at the impact of child care on local economic development.

Recommendation 7: To coordinate the use of existing federal, public and private financial resources for Early Care and Education services. This can be achieved by identifying where and how money and resources for children's services are allocated in local communities and how disbursements are made. The creation of a child care trust fund and developing public policy and legislation that supports the recommendations of the  Visioning Plan.

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To order free copies of the Visioning Plan
and/or the Executive Summary, please send requests to:

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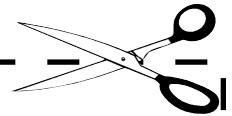
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